

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of preventing blockages of flow paths of a separator, the separator being set to achieve a desired fat content during processing of a fat-containing product such as milk, the method steps comprising:

determining a concentration of the fat content of an outflowing product phase from the separator to detect an imminent clogging; and

shifting a separation zone in a separator drum of the separator for a defined minimum time period by changing operating parameters when a defined fat content limit value, which is greater than the desired fat content, is one of reached and exceeded to prevent blockages of flow paths of the separator; and

after the defined minimum time period is reached, the separator is returned to the desired fat content setting.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the fat-containing product is cold milk and the cold milk is separated into cream and skimmed milk.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the cold milk has a temperature of 2-15°C and is separated into cream having a fat content of 28-45% and into skimmed milk.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the separation zone in the drum is shifted toward an interior of the drum when the fat content limit value has been one of reached and exceeded.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the determining of the concentration of the fat content takes place by a mass flow meter.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 5, wherein the mass flow meter has a separate density output.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the separation zone in the drum is shifted toward an interior of the drum by a throttling of a valve in a skimmed milk outlet.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 7, wherein the throttling of the valve in the skimmed milk outlet takes place by a timer for a defined time period.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the separation zone is shifted by an increase of an inflow rate.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the inflow rate is increased within a time period of from 5-60 seconds.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the inflow rate is increased within a time period of from 5-20 seconds.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the inflow rate is increased by 5-40%.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the inflow rate is increased by 5-20%.

14. (Previously Presented) A device for implementing the method of Claim 1, the device comprising a separator for processing the milk and further comprising a measuring and control device

for detecting an imminent clogging by determining the concentration of the fat content of an outflowing product phase and

for changing operating parameters of the separator when a defined fat content limit value has been one of reached and exceeded, such changing of the operating parameters

being designed for shifting the separation zone in the separator drum for the defined minimum time period for preventing a clogging.

15. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 14, wherein the separator is a cold milk separator having an inlet for cold milk, an outlet for skimmed milk and a cream outlet, and an analyzer is arranged in the cream outlet by which analyzer the fat content of the cream is determined.

16. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 15, wherein the analyzer is connected with a control input of a control valve in the skimmed milk outlet.

17. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 15, wherein the analyzer is connected with a device for controlling an inflow rate of cold milk into the separator.

18. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 14, wherein the control valve is controlled by a timer.

19. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 15, wherein the inlet extends from a bottom of the separator into a separator drum having a vertical axis of rotation.

20. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 15, wherein the separator includes a swirl space on a separating disk and a regulating disk having a diameter larger than a gripper chamber cover, which swirl disk, regulating disk and gripper chamber cover are arranged in a path to the skimmed milk outlet.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, wherein the cold milk has a temperature of 4°-10°C and is separated into cream having a fat content of 28-45% and into skimmed milk.